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**THE NEW RUSSIA IN THE NEW ASIA**

**Stephen J. Blank**

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## FOREWORD

In the past, Imperial and Soviet Russia played an active role in Asia. This is no less true for the current Russian republic. While Western analyses and policies may downplay Russia's presence in Asia, Russian leaders do not. In Asia, Russia exercises an important influence on regional developments. No less important is the way which policymakers in Moscow perceive their tasks and goals in Asia. These views will profoundly affect the further development of Russia's internal political, military, and economic structures.

This monograph offers an account of the current struggle inside Russia over Asian policy and of the direction of that struggle. The author describes the dominant Russian viewpoints on policy in Asia. Current proponents of an Asian policy based primarily upon military considerations seem to hold sway. Advocates of this approach downplay economic integration with Asia, view other states mainly in terms of threat, favor an alliance with China rather than merely friendly relations, openly take a hard line with Japan, and minimize the threat of North Korean nuclear proliferation. Should this view prevail, Russian cooperation with Washington will be difficult, tensions with Japan will remain (if not grow), and Russia's efforts to become a democratic and economically competitive player will be impeded. Since Asia is the most dynamic sector of the global economy, Russian developments, insofar as they affect this region, have a deep significance for the future of Russia and Asian international affairs and security.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this analysis of critical developments in an increasingly vital region of world affairs.



JOHN W. MOUNTCASTLE  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR**

STEPHEN J. BLANK has been an Associate Professor of Russian/Soviet Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute since 1989. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Blank was Associate Professor for Soviet Studies at the Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education of Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base. Dr. Blank's M.A. and Ph.D. are in Russian history from the University of Chicago. He has published numerous articles on Soviet military and foreign policies, notably in the Third World, and is the author of a forthcoming study of the Soviet Commissariat of Nationalities and editor of books on Soviet foreign policy in Latin America and on the future of the Soviet military.

## SUMMARY

Russia continues to play a significant role in Asian international affairs even though U.S. policy now minimizes Russia's importance to Asian issues. Russian elites are intensely struggling over Asian policy. In this struggle we can identify two rival views: an economic one and a military or militarizing one. In the former, Asian states are potential economic partners and Russia should seek domestic reform and international economic integration, mainly with Japan, to enter into Asia's dynamic economy. This view also stresses friendship with China and more active efforts against nuclear and missile proliferation, especially in North Korea. The latter sees Asia as hostile, fixates on a U.S.-Japanese threat, and renounces both cooperation and the settlement of the outstanding territorial dispute with Japan. Instead, it favors alliance with China on grounds of *Realpolitik* against both Japan and the United States, and ideologically on the basis of an authoritarianism that "works," provides economic growth, respect for the military, and "order." Finally, this view's adherents dismiss North Korean nuclear proliferation except where it may lead Japan to follow suit.

The danger inherent in the latter view is that it has taken the form of military intervention in politics. This intervention openly displays the fact that the military has escaped close civilian control and engages in overtly provocative activities to derail rapprochement with Japan. To cement their position in Russian politics and to retain the primacy of the military viewpoint in Far Eastern policy specifically and security policy more generally, advocates of this position have offered a comprehensive, but in many ways dubious, strategic rationale for the pro-Chinese and anti-Japanese stand.

Although nobody disputes the need for a friendly China, an alliance with it is not what the reformers want, especially at the expense of close relationships with Japan. Clearly the adherents of the military viewpoint seek to retain the ability to threaten Japan and establish an impregnable maritime security



zone around Russia even when no U.S. or Japanese threat is discernible. Although they want the United States to restrain Japan, they also demand that the U.S. Navy, in effect, abdicate its strategic superiority in antisubmarine warfare in the Pacific as the price of rapprochement with Japan. This is a most unlikely outcome, for it is the United States which benefits most from Russo-Japanese tension and sees no reason to yield its position for Russia's benefit.

Russia's developing Asian policy will lead to diminished relations with Southeast Asia and India and could encourage antireform elements at home. Thus security policy in Asia and the fate of Russian reform are linked inextricably. Implicitly, Russian Asian policy must be reoriented if Russia is to overcome its distorted historical legacy and fully participate in the new Asia. For this reason the United States only injures its own interests if it does not pay close attention to the trends in Russia's Asian policy.

# **THE NEW RUSSIA IN THE NEW ASIA**

## **Introduction.**

Russia remains a key player in Asian security, although U.S. thinking about Asia tends to ignore Russia's Asian presence and its impact. The Bush and Clinton administrations' formal policy statements on Russia and Asia do not mention Russia in the Asian context. Often scholars writing on U.S. policy in Asia and/or Asian security issues also omit Russia from their analysis.<sup>1</sup>

But Russian policymakers do not make this mistake even though they generally acknowledge that Russia's (and the USSR's) failure to bring its full weight (or potential) to bear in Asia lies at the root of this neglect. Russia's Asian role remains incomplete relative to its economic potential, and current economic conditions inhibit more serious and deeper linkages with Asia. Russia still stands apart from Asia's amazing dynamism. But as philosophers tell us, an absence is also a presence. Therefore no account of Asian prospects that ignores Russia's potential and its unique realities can be adequate to either subject.

Russia's government and political class have never ignored their Asian connection. Political struggles in 1992-93 over foreign policy revolved around the degree to which the government took *sufficient* account of those interests in Asia, not whether there were any. Nobody argued that Russian interests in Asia were marginal. From Yeltsin down, political figures openly proclaimed the aim of enhancing Russia's position and national interests.<sup>2</sup>

## **Russia's Strategic Options in Asia.**

However, Russia's real problem in Asia is choosing between two fundamental and incompatible approaches in both its Asian and overall foreign policy posture. These approaches may be labelled as the militarized and the

economic approaches. Two recent articles in the Russian and Asian press exemplify these rival approaches. In the first article, Admiral Igor Kasatonov, First Deputy Commander in Chief of Russia's navy, stated in Vladivostok that nuclear dumping would continue in the Sea of Japan's enclosed waters, only 200 miles from Japan. Although Prime Minister Viktor S. Chernomyrdin had banned it, the dumping would continue because the Admiral is "confident that Chernomyrdin's veto is a purely political move designed to please Japan and that the government will soon give permission for another dumping of radioactive waste."<sup>3</sup> The second, economic, approach to Asia appeared in a Radio Vladivostok transmission of October 21, 1993.

Shinichi Kobayashi, deputy general director of Japan's development institute, made a sensational statement during his visit to Vladivostok. According to him, the Tumen River project that has caused such a stir was proposed by some UN specialists who failed to take Russian interests in the Asia Pacific region into account, and thus it has no future. He also said that Japan was willing to propose a more acceptable project which would turn Vladivostok into a pillar of Russian integration on the Pacific coast.<sup>4</sup>

The difference between these two approaches is not merely that the military one brusquely offends Japan and the economic one promotes unprecedented Russo-Japanese efforts towards greater regional integration. Much deeper differences go further and have profound significance for Russia in Asia. First, Kasatonov's statement came as a "complete surprise" to Foreign Ministry officials.<sup>5</sup> His confidence in defying and dismissing his government's policy illustrates a fundamental structural crisis of Russian security policy. As Pavel Felgengauer, the respected defense correspondent of *Segodnya*, told a U.S.-Russian conference in California in November 1993, the armed forces may be under commanders' operational control; but commanders, officers, and troops are by no means under the government's strategic command and control.<sup>6</sup> Although much of the concern about this phenomenon has focused on Europe or the Caucasus, it is no less important in Asia. Kasatonov's remarks and the dumping may also have been part of a deeper political campaign by military elements

to undo the positive results of Yeltsin's October 1993 visit to Japan.<sup>7</sup> These remarks indicate the armed forces' continuing intervention in politics.

Throughout 1992-93 the armed forces successfully and publicly intervened in the discussion over the fate of the Southern Kurile Islands. These islands are the central question in relations with Japan (Japan calls them the Northern Territories, a term which for obvious reason Russia shuns). The Russian military mobilized parliamentary and public opinion against concessions to Japan, using arguments that, if analyzed carefully, are strategically questionable.<sup>8</sup> This intervention helped torpedo two proposed Yeltsin visits to Japan and constrained opportunities for serious discussions when he finally went. Yet these intrusions went unpunished. Thereby encouraged, the military hard-liners continue to undermine civilian authority and official diplomacy while conducting their own truculent and provocative anti-Japan policy.<sup>9</sup> Some civilian analysts even believe that Admiral Kasatonov deliberately aimed to upstage the government.<sup>10</sup>

Kasatonov's insubordination and his arrogant disdain for civilian authority showed a blunt disregard for the broader implications of his actions for national interests. Unfortunately they continued the tradition of casting Russia's Far East interests in essentially military terms. Traditionally, the military view has been that the region is constantly threatened by enemies, particularly by the United States, Japan, and China. In addition, the military has adopted a visibly racist attitude toward Japan and China. Today Japanese concerns are regarded with a combination of fear and (visibly) arrogant disdain, while the Far Eastern region is seen basically through the prism of potential military scenarios.

The economic approach sees regional integration and joint cooperation as Russia's fundamental Asian-Pacific objective and recognizes, that 1) the Far East, in Chernomyrdin's words, is the "gateway" to the Asian, if not world, economies, 2) to join these economies, reconciliation with Japan is indispensable, and 3) failure to join that economy spells disaster for Russia. Far from deliberately provoking Japan, this policy's advocates seek to resolve outstanding disputes and to lessen mutual

suspensions in the interests of both sides. They do not view the Asia Pacific Region (APR) in zero-sum terms of warfare or of 'ontological' enemies. Instead economic integration in Asia benefits everyone. Almost every civilian analyst understands that the economic development of Siberia, the Maritime Provinces, and Russian Asia in general is the precondition for any effective Russian role in Asia's economy and politics. Otherwise Russia will not be taken seriously in Asia.<sup>11</sup> Therefore Russian statesmen should devise appropriate policies and institutions to facilitate economic development and international integration. A 1991 Soviet study, *The Russia Far Eastern Economic Yearbook*, reflected this standpoint, its continuing stress on ties to Japan, and the broader vision of a cooperative multilateralism in Northeast Asia. The authors wrote that,

In this connection a special role of Japan in the economic development of the Far East should be mentioned. Under the conditions of the Soviet policy alteration Japan, with its powerful industrial, technological, and financial potential, as it seems, should play the leading part in the development of multilateral cooperation. First of all it means setting up of the economic zone "Sea of Japan" in the North-East of Asia which could involve the economy of the Soviet Far East, the North-East of China, People's Democratic Republic of Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, and other interested countries. Realization of this project will contribute to the development of not only bilateral but also trilateral and multilateral cooperation, it will give a new impetus to the development of the Soviet-Japanese economic ties.<sup>12</sup>

### **Contending Russian Approaches to Asian Issues.**

This divergence between the economic and militarizing approaches to Asia finds expression in tangible policy differences on outstanding regional security issues. While both sides agree that nuclear proliferation in North Korea is a serious political matter having repercussions for Russia should a war or more intense crisis develop, Russian generals discount Pyongyang's possession of nuclear weapons as having little serious *strategic significance* for Russia or for regional strategic and military balances. Therefore they do not take that threat too seriously.<sup>13</sup> *Krasnaia Zvezda* cited Russia's

Foreign Intelligence Service in stating that there was serious reason to doubt a North Korean 'breakthrough' to produce nuclear weapons. The article's author concluded that Pyongyang 'cooked up' the nuclear question to continue mobilizing the population while Washington did so to combat communism. However,

What is bad is that the lack of clarity surrounding this problem on the Korean Peninsula could prompt other East Asian countries to embark on the same nuclear arms race. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are already being talked about in this context.<sup>14</sup>

Obviously the military's main concern is a nuclear Japan, either within the umbrella of the U.S. security treaty, or if it breaks down, on its own. In that case, their fear is that Japan would probably go nuclear or come under great pressure to do so.<sup>15</sup> Although preventing a nuclear arms race in Asia is a shared goal, the view that the current crisis is 'cooked up' solely for political reasons represents the military's suspicion of the United States and Japan. The militarized view's spokesmen also oppose pressing Pyongyang too hard with sanctions. Rather, they maintain that on this issue it is more important to come close to China's position.<sup>16</sup>

This article's author also opined that this crisis provides an opportunity to launch an Asian version of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In this process Russia would naturally be invited to play a leading role in determining any outcome to the Korean crisis.<sup>17</sup> These are old, one-sided proposals to leverage Russia's military power so Russia will be taken seriously in Asia and to constrain U.S. and Japanese policies. At recent Russo-Japanese military meetings to create confidence-building measures, Russia's delegation called for a CSCE and Confidence-Building Measures (CBM) process like Europe's. Furthermore, Major General Anatoly Lukyanov stated that Russia wanted multilateral collective security in all regions.<sup>18</sup> Everything that has been written on Soviet and now Russian proposals along these lines indicates that these proposals (which go back to Brezhnev) have as their aim both the inclusion of Russia in Asian affairs and the ensuing diminution of the U.S.-Japan alliance in favor of some amorphous collective security

system.<sup>19</sup> Rather than build Asian security from below as many have argued, Russia continues to push the same one-sided proposals which are visibly anti-Japanese in nature. That these proposals are targeted against the U.S.-Japanese alliance is obvious from the statement by V.N. Bunin of the Academy of Sciences holding that the U.S.-Japanese alliance must no longer be directed against any countries in the region.<sup>20</sup> But calling for such processes also implies disregarding other states' security, particularly Japan's. Thus the Russian military delegation to Tokyo apparently avoided discussing Japan's primary security concern, North Korean nuclear proliferation.<sup>21</sup>

Russia's call for a CSCE type system disregards the efforts of Asian states. It seeks to pre-define for them the parameters of security, thus showing little grasp of what is required of Russia for full participation in Asian security. Moreover, what really is intended here is that Japan be deprived of its security anchor and subsumed under Russian control while its concerns are ignored. This is not a viable basis for either enhancing Asian security or Russian integration into it.

Therefore, the nonproliferation crisis apparently offers military grounds for Russia to float long-standing and long rejected initiatives to join the area's security agenda. These proposals, either advanced or implicit in the militarizing approach, reflect Russia's continuing inability to play an active role in Asia on a nonmilitary basis, fear of U.S.-Japanese policies, and the danger that Russia might even be shut out of the defense and security agenda on its own borders. Some old thinkers even decry the loss of contacts with Pyongyang brought on by the recognition of Seoul and the abrogation of the old treaty with the DPRK. They wish to resume selling arms there, ostensibly to regain an audience and some leverage.<sup>22</sup>

For the adherents of the economic approach, proliferation in and of itself and any further nuclearization of Asia constitute a threat to Russia regardless of their origin. Russia's Ambassador to Seoul, Georgii F. Kunadze, stated that Russia's principled position is absolute objection to the presence of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula (this also includes U.S. systems whose absence obviously enhances Russian security).<sup>23</sup> These figures view North

Korea's gambit and the world's response not as a bluff but as a serious potential crisis with dangerous regional implications. For example, Vadim Makarenko wrote that Russia cannot remain impartial about Chinese nuclear testing because of the danger of an arms race and nuclear proliferation.

For Russia, moreover, with its sparsely populated Siberia and Far East, and its sharply decreasing capacities for maintaining large conventional armed forces, guarantees of nuclear security are becoming vitally necessary. This makes Russia extremely interested in the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons in the world.<sup>24</sup>

The differing perspectives on nuclear proliferation in Asia, and on various states and their policies, do not mean that each side is utterly insensitive to the other. The primacy of the United States and China, and the relative downgrading of both India and Japan, are common to both groups for sound geopolitical reasons since China is on Russia's border. Both sides, for instance, argue for denuclearizing Korea, if only to get U.S. systems out. Rather, it is a question of defining Russia's interests, the nature and source of threats to it, differing sailencies of various issues, and different institutional responsibilities. When sponsors of the military approach look at Asia they first see the strategic and military threats, not economic opportunities. Those come afterwards. The adherents of the economic approach reverse the process. First they perceive the economic challenges and opportunities that either are open to Russia or that it is losing through mistaken policies. Only then do they concentrate on military issues.

Accordingly Russia can only resolve the direction of its Asian policies by first determining its internal identity and direction. By the end of 1993, a converging approach between the military and the diplomats on major security issues evidently came into being.<sup>25</sup> That consensus apparently has formed around the militarized approach. But since Russia has not yet consummated a breakthrough to a new, stable, and legitimate democratic order or government, Russia has yet to establish for itself the attributes of stable and predictable policies either in economics or on broader security issues that characterize a security community.<sup>26</sup> Until then foreign and



defense policies will remain objects of fierce contention and debate will continue.

### **Russia's Instability and Asian States.**

Meanwhile, Russia's instability reinforces skepticism about its claims of goodwill or ability to act in the new Asia. Asian states cannot suspend their policies and wait for Russia to define its course. For that reason Russia's effort to get Asian states to say that it is a legitimate and full player in vital issues is a self-defeating process. If Russia must insist that it has that status, it only shows that Russia lacks standing in Asia. Russia will then have to insist all the louder that it is a player or try and force the agenda to the issues where Russia fulfills that role: raw military power. That line of action will only further compound its isolation from Asia. Russia's absence from the important Seattle APEC meetings in November 1993 signifies that "absence" from Asia's economic revolution and overall security agenda which are preconditions for joining Asia.

Russia's instability also feeds Asian communist hopes that a more undemocratic Russia might yet emerge. Reports from Hong Kong allege that China's government and Party privately supported the anti-Yeltsin forces in October 1993. In addition, there are solid grounds for suspecting prior Chinese collusion with, or prior knowledge of, the coup in August 1991, especially among the military.<sup>27</sup> In closed speeches, mass media, and propaganda publications for party officials in civilian and military institutions, an anti-Yeltsin line emerged.<sup>28</sup> China's President and General Secretary of the Communist Party, Jiang Zemin, reportedly described Russia's experience as gun barrel determinism and depicted the October 1993 confrontation as a mere power struggle. His point is that when any state is threatened the armed forces determine the outcome. In effect, he made an apologia for the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989.<sup>29</sup> Party Secretary and Politburo member Ding Guangen went still further. He, too, saw events as merely a power struggle and concluded that Russia will become still more unstable in the future.

The bloody military conflict which was an outcome of the power struggle, will have a negative impact on the future political stability in Russia and will cause more obstacles to the economic and political reforms. The army played a decisive role in this round of power struggle and, in the future, it will have a bigger role in deciding the government and the core leadership level, playing a guiding function.<sup>30</sup>

Given the closeness and authoritarian and ideological congruence of the two militaries, the political autonomy of the Russian military, and the extent of Russo-Chinese arms transfers where the two military systems interact, these observations could become profoundly important and disturbing in the not too distant future.

Other consequences of Russia's erratic course are equally important for Asia. First, Russia's instability reinforces non-Communist Asian inclinations to look to Washington as guarantor of last resort. Second, the possibilities of an antireform coalition coming to power, or that Russia may collapse into a violent civil war, restrain Asian Communist leaders from carrying out the political reforms needed to reduce fears of their foreign ambitions. North Korea and China undoubtedly would prefer some renovated form of ideological solidarity with Russia if it were available both for its own sake and to reinforce purely *Realpolitik* considerations of national interest.

### **Domestic Politics and Russia's Asian Policies.**

Resolution of Russia's fundamental domestic issues must precede the determination of a strategic direction (or directions) for Russian policy in Asia. This policy, however it develops, must include a coherent economic program to revitalize Siberia and the Russian Far East (Primorskii Krai or the Maritime Provinces). Observers still see an uncoordinated and unstrategic pursuit of momentary tactical advantage at the expense of a steadier, more strategic course in Asia. Nuclear dumping in the Sea of Japan exemplifies this preference for immediate short-term solutions whose consequences are not fully thought out.<sup>31</sup> For substantive policy change to occur, the domestic groundwork must be laid first. It must then be

consistently implemented and articulated throughout the state, including the corridors of the Ministry of Defense. Clearly that is not yet the case.

Gorbachev effected such a strategic resolution in Russia's Asian policy by building on the already developing inclination towards rapprochement with China that began in 1981-82. But to break through to meet China's three conditions: leaving Afghanistan, terminating support for Vietnam's war in Cambodia, and demilitarizing the Sino-Russian border, he had to oust hardliners and appoint men more inclined to rapprochement and normalization with China. Bureaucratic restructuring, and changed ideological perceptions, were essential preconditions for the very successful China policy that Shevardnadze called the regime's most important achievement in international affairs.<sup>32</sup> These personnel and policy changes allowed leading officials and spokesmen to argue that China and the USSR stood at the same level of domestic development and confronted similar issues of reform. Since their domestic agendas were 'synchronized' they now could come to terms with each other to improve mutual understanding.<sup>33</sup> Congruent domestic political and ideological perspectives made for congruent foreign policies according to Gorbachev's pro-reform spokesmen.<sup>34</sup> Admittedly this was a simplistic analysis, especially after Tiananmen Square, but it does show that transformations in the bureaucracy and conceptual framework of Soviet elites had to precede a decisive turn in policy.

This precept is no less valid today. Russia's continuing unrest prevents it from making a decisive break with the past and perpetuates older uncertainties and insecurities. Many have observed a discernible and ongoing swing to the right. Certainly if reforms are blocked the "military first" approach will grow even stronger than it currently is. Then Siberia and the Far East will still be seen in military, not economic, terms. Asian policy will perpetuate the antique Leninist perception that Russia exists in a state of more or less total war with all its neighbors. While alliances are possible, indeed necessary, policy will be geared to military security first and economics second. Economic policy will be based on its military utility.

Unfortunately many domestic forces in Russia are pushing for a primarily military-oriented view in Asian policy. Their efforts can be seen in the continuing rapprochement with China. This rapprochement is especially visible in the arms sales to China and military pressure for an actual alliance with it. Such an alliance would continue hostility to Japan and suspicion of the United States. And, at home, such a posture means delaying economic reform or even devising a program to answer economic needs of the Maritime Provinces and Asiatic Russia. This pressure is often expressed in ideological terms that reflect, first of all, domestic policy struggles. Former Prime Minister Ryzhkov's interview in a Chinese newspaper was then reprinted in the trade union newspaper, *Trud*, a conservative publication. Ryzhkov masqueraded as an early supporter of market reforms, but derided the current reform efforts as "blind copying of the U.S. economy." Rather, with due accounting for the differences between them, Russia should more attentively follow China's path.<sup>35</sup> Advocacy of the "Chinese model" is an indicator that separates reformers from conservatives or reactionaries. Ryzhkov's "rehabilitation," so to speak, is also an indicator in the domestic struggle.

#### **The Resolution: Russia's Security Concepts and Asia.**

However, the most prominent and consequential indicators of policy trends towards Asia are the security concept composed by the Security Council in May 1993 and accepted by Yeltsin, and the Defense Doctrine, whose "Basic Principles" were published in November 1993. The Security Council paper advances an expansive view of Russian objectives and threats to Russia. Russia, it concludes, is a great power due to its potential and actual influence on world affairs. It is responsible not only for the new world order since 1991 but also for the creation of the system of relations among the former Soviet republics. Russia is, therefore, the guarantor of that system's stability. Any threat to integration of the CIS, a fundamental political goal (and one that can only mean integration around Russia, an inherently expansive and quasi-imperial concept), is a threat. Russia must play a greater role in international organizations to ward off such threats.<sup>36</sup> The economic threat

is that the country may be relegated to an inferior industrial status and a long-term colonial position as a purveyor of fuels and raw materials which cannot compete in global markets.<sup>37</sup> This viewpoint reaffirms the Leninist belief and Soviet economic policy that the world economy is a zero-sum game. This deep-rooted, autarkic and nationalist reflex inhibited fruitful economic intercourse abroad for nearly 75 years.

This Security Council paper naturally reflects Russia's primacy in international relations between itself and the United States in Asia and Europe. That primacy is based on common interests in strategic stability, nuclear nonproliferation, and prevention of regional conflicts. The concept paper then sets forth a hierarchical order of the countries of importance to Russia in the Asian-Pacific region.

... our foreign policy priorities include the development of balanced and stable relations with all countries, especially such key states as the US, China, Japan, and India, and the establishment of multilateral cooperation in strengthening security. In this context, it is urgent to consolidate the breakthrough achieved in relations with China—from our standpoint—the region's most important state in geopolitical and economic terms.<sup>38</sup>

The paper obviously denigrates Japan's largely economic power even as it states that progress towards normalization is very important. Searching for that goal by resolving the territorial issue is expedient but should not be done to the detriment of Russia's interests.<sup>39</sup> The stress on China, and the downgrading of Japan and India, are logically related. Partnership with China eliminates the essential reason for the former Indo-Soviet alliance, an anti-Chinese move to encircle and constrain China.<sup>40</sup> Russo-Indian relations must find a new footing and basis for amity other than shared democracy. The new line of concentrating on China has overturned the old friendship with India. Now it will be based on a common democratic ethos and, more prosaically, shared anti-Islamic security concerns in Central Asia, a factor that also aligns both states' interests in the region with China's.<sup>41</sup> A basically militarized view, with its stress on military threats also contributes to the downgrading of Japan, an economic power, and of economic relationships in general. The Security

Council's view of economic threats to Russia evinces suspicion of Japan and of foreign investment in general. It also reveals an inherent contradiction of the militarizing view.

On the one hand, Russia must be as self-sufficient as possible and produce at contemporary industrial and post-industrial levels to sustain its Asian position. At the same time, Asiatic Russia must remain the raw material base for that program. The most promising region in Russia for international economic integration and Russia's 'leap forward' is sacrificed to being the same kind of domestic colony that policymakers fear Russia as a whole might become. The government's fundamental inattention to a vigorous expansion of Russia's Far Eastern economic position can also be found in the Draft Foreign Economic Policy Concept of October 1993. It states that the Far East still accounts for less than 20 percent of exports and imports. In 1993, trends towards a growth of Russian exports, notably machinery and engineering products, became visible and should be encouraged. But it simultaneously notes that the most significant partners in commodity turnover are a small group of European countries who import Russian energy products and export machinery, equipment and consumer goods back to Russia. Hence,

The strategic task of foreign economic policy in the 1990s is an expansion of the geography of foreign economic activity, primarily to countries of Asia and America and also the restoration of ties to the former members of CEMA.<sup>42</sup>

Logically, that guideline should lead to expanded ties with Japan, but those are ruled out on political grounds. Therefore, Asiatic Russia is consigned to the traditional position of raw material appendage and exporter and its industrial development is retarded. That foreign trade guideline would be in full and unresolved contradiction to the security concept unless economic ties with China took precedence over trade with Japan. But it is hardly clear that China needs Russian energy products or raw materials or will pay for them in cash. Indeed, there are already complaints that China is exploiting Russia by not paying in quality goods or cash for those products.<sup>43</sup> Thus it is more than likely from a policy standpoint that any substantial increase in exports to Asia in general, and

to China in particular, will take the form of raw materials, arms, and military technology. That prospect is not an encouraging one for either Russian or Asian security.

Logically this outcome means that Siberia and the Maritime Provinces will be the cash cow whose proceeds are exported abroad for currency and equipment to rebuild the industrial and post-industrial plant. The antinomies of the security concept can only be reconciled if these provinces remain Moscow's domestic colonies. That outcome would reinforce the existing regional divisions of labor and economic specialization that lie at the root of the Far East's rising political dissatisfaction with Moscow.<sup>44</sup> Moscow contemplates no fundamental reorganization of the area's economic structure even if it is the 'gateway' to the world market. Yeltsin will continue Gorbachev's policy which talked a good game about international integration but did little or nothing to achieve it.<sup>45</sup> Despite high-level discussion of schemes to convert the region's military industrial production to civilian purposes, and open its extractive and other industries to foreign participation, it is unlikely this will happen on a large scale. Moscow remains determined to control events and processes there because of the high level of economic uncertainty that plagues all of Russia, even if it thereby increases the risks to domestic stability.<sup>46</sup>

Notwithstanding talk of change, the Department of Foreign Economic Relations within the Council of Ministers has already reported that for years to come Russia "will hardly be able to play a significant role in the system of international economic relations of the entire region, and its priorities will basically be concentrated in the directions of Northeast Asia."<sup>47</sup> Russia will continue accepting the current pattern of Asian economic stratification and implicitly write off Southeast Asia, the fastest growing sector of the world economy. Given such outlooks and myopia, the persistence of past policies is not surprising.

A Vladivostok-based analysis of the region in the military press reflected the militarizing approach's underlying assumptions about the economic position of Asiatic Russia even as it decried the region's continued backwardness. The authors cited the lack of a coherent government plan for

economic reform, Russia's continuing exclusion from many foreign markets in industry due to the cold war, the concentration on labor-intensive rather than capital-intensive industries oriented towards high productivity and exports, and the fundamental uncompetitiveness of any products brought into being by converting regional military-industrial complexes to civilian production. Those industries were tailored specifically to local needs and are not competitive elsewhere.

Thus, under any economic system, the region holds little attraction for foreign investors. Nor is preserving the existing regional structure of production advantageous even in a developing market economy. According to this analysis, Western proposals and demands, as well as demands to repay debts, mean that East-West opposition still exists in economics. Disarmament proposals also only lead to unilateral disarmament against Russia's national interest. No economic miracle will take place here nor is one intended. It follows that the region will remain primarily Russia's military advance post on Asia and the Pacific Ocean, not a window to Asia's economy.<sup>48</sup>

It is not coincidence that this analysis was published in Vladivostok's military newspaper, *Krasnaya Znamya* (Red Banner), and fully reflects the militarizing view. It postulates a continuing cold war in economics and international relations, a plot by others to suppress Russia, as well as the view that military conversion is fruitless, etc. As such it shares with the security concept and the militarized approach many implicit, and perhaps explicit, assumptions about the APR.

The defense doctrine published in November 1993 consolidates those concepts in a policy context. That context has been most commented upon for Europe and the Near Abroad. Typically and wrongly, its implications for Russia's strategic posture in Asia are ignored by analysts except for Aleksei Arbatov. The doctrine also displays the military's regained supremacy in the sphere of threat assessment and policy after its trials under Gorbachev. It was wholly designed by the military and then rushed through the cabinet by Yeltsin who then approved it. Thus it reflects a decidedly one-sided approach to Russian security issues. Of particular relevance



in Asia are statements about nuclear options, dangers, and threats to Russia. Those threats are:

- Territorial claims by other states on Russia,
- Existing and potential local wars around Russia's borders;
- Possible use of weapons of mass destruction;
- Proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems, and state-of-the-art production techniques in conjunction with certain states, organizations, and terrorists to fulfill their military and political aspirations;
- Threats to strategic stability by a violation of international arms treaties;
- Attempts to destabilize the Russian Federation or interfere in its internal affairs;
- Suppression of the rights, freedom, and interests of Russian citizens in foreign states;
- Attacks on Russian military installations abroad; and,
- Expansion of military blocs and alliances against the interests of Russia's security.<sup>49</sup>

Those dangers become threats when forces are built up on Russia's borders to the point of disrupting the correlation of forces or of attacking installations and the border. Similarly, threats also appear when troops are trained for action in Russia or its allies' territory, actions are taken that hinder Russian strategic systems for supporting nuclear forces, state military C<sup>2</sup> or, above all, their space component, and foreign troops are introduced without U.N. sanction into neighboring states.<sup>50</sup>

According to Russian doctrine, if Russian command and control, nuclear, chemical, power, or electric installations are attacked, even by conventional weapons, Russia will consider first use of nuclear weapons. As the doctrine states, Russia will not use strategic systems against a nonnuclear party to the nonproliferation treaty of 1968 unless it participates as an ally

with a state having nuclear weapons or carries out joint actions with that state in support of an invasion of Russia, its territory, armed forces, other troops, or allies.<sup>51</sup> Thus the doctrine extends nuclear deterrence throughout the CIS, even if it has not been formally requested by a CIS member in an alliance with Russia. Lieutenant General Valery Manilov, Deputy Secretary of the Security Council, confirms that,

Russia retains the right to make a first nuclear strike against territories, troops, or military installations of an aggressor state even if the latter does not possess nuclear weapons but is under the "nuclear umbrella" of some ally or military-political bloc.<sup>52</sup>

As Arbatov observes, these "nuclear first" threats and expansive definition of dangers and threats to Russia certainly cannot apply to the United States or NATO, or have only limited utility there. Obviously they are directed against Ukraine and Central European states wishing to join NATO. But in Asia these provisions are clearly aimed at Japan, which, even if it only supports exclusively conventional U.S. forces in operations against Russia, is vulnerable to nuclear strikes. Moreover, China, too, is supposedly deterred from theater conventional operations against Russia by this threat of a nuclear response. This is particularly threatening to China which, alone of nuclear states, publicly adheres to the doctrine of no first strike. Should China wake up to the threat implicit in this document and realize that Russia's nuclear strategy is directed against it, it could follow suit and revise its doctrine. This is especially the case since its forces will be inferior to those of Russia and the United States for the next 10-15 years.<sup>53</sup> In that case nuclear containment in the Far East will fail, or will be more likely to do so.<sup>54</sup> But China can only become a threat to Russia if Russia continues providing it with high quality conventional weapons and technology.<sup>55</sup> Russian military men discount this possibility even though it happened in the 1960s. Instead, they point to the current nuclear nonaggression pact negotiated in early 1994 by Foreign Minister Kozyrev.<sup>56</sup>

In other words, the military perspective that stresses nuclear first scenarios and holds that China is the most important country to both deter and be friendly with, is

inherently contradictory. This doctrine, with its expansive requirements for defense against very expanded threat assessments, will not assure nonproliferation or strategic stability in Asia, but will lead instead to more military dead ends.

### **The Strategic Bases of Russia's Emerging Asian Policy.**

Nevertheless we must understand the foundations of this approach to Russia's Asian posture to explain its durability and seeming rationality. There is no doubt that the China first approach comprises tremendous support across all Russian political life.<sup>57</sup>

As in the past, Russia faces two potential military threats in Asia: one from the land and one from the sea (both, of course, include aerial warfare). Unquestionably the land threat from China, particularly through Manchuria and Mongolia, is the most dangerous. That was the case even before the advent of nuclear weapons. The strategic competitions with the United States and with China only magnified that danger. China, or forces based there, threaten the entire strategic depth of Asiatic Russia and threaten to sever it from European Russia by interdicting any means of transport to and from European Russia. The weakness of communications with European Russia was, and remains, the primary strategic Achilles heel of the Russian position in Asia.<sup>58</sup> Therefore a threat from China, whether Chinese in origin or from a foreign occupier or ally of China, compromised Russia's European strategic position. The nightmare of coalitions, of a two or three front war, especially in an area that was weakly tied to Russia and could not feed itself, but was regarded as both a raw material treasure house and the envy of others, has obligated Russian governments always to make sure that either hostile forces did not dominate China, or that they were somehow tied down or contained.<sup>59</sup> Ideally the way to do this, as after 1937, was to incite Sino-Japanese rivalry or at least distance them from each other so that the two states could not coalesce.

This is because the second threat in Asia was the Japanese sea-based one, a threat that was also profoundly magnified once the United States used Japan as a forward base. That

threat became still greater with the advent of sea-launched nuclear weapons on both sides. That development made the Far East still more of a defensive bastion for Russia because it became home port for many of its SSBNs and a lucrative target for the United States (especially when horizontal escalation scenarios enjoyed a certain vogue in Washington). It became ever more necessary for Russia to deter, if not contain, Japan as well as China and the United States and to maintain naval superiority in the waters in and around Japan lest they become a platform for strikes upon the USSR.<sup>60</sup> Under Brezhnev it became necessary for the USSR to intimidate, encircle, or contain China and threaten Japan by concentrating heavy strategic and conventional forces in the area. The unfortunate and wholly logical outcome was that, with U.S. blessing, China and Japan came to terms in 1978 creating maximum peril for Moscow. Thanks to the stubborn policy of antagonizing everyone in Asia, Moscow stimulated an anti-Soviet coalition comprising U.S. strategic and conventional forces, China and Japan with the last two being potential forward bases for those forces.<sup>61</sup> While this prospect led some to consider a policy of *tous azimuts* (defense in all directions) against everyone in Asia, that proved to be insupportable.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, after 1982, Moscow opted for normalization first with China, and in 1986-87 in an overall detente with the United States. Thus the Chinese 'card' remains central to Moscow today precisely because it is the greatest threat to Russia and the most unpredictable state in the region. Moscow's strategic doctrine is clearly aimed at it and Japan. According to Aleksei Arbatov, China is the enemy against whom theater conventional scenarios and war games are programmed.<sup>63</sup>

Japan alone is not too great a threat as long as it is restricted by the United States. Accordingly, Moscow now supports the alliance relationship between those two states provided it is made into a still larger collective security pact including Russia.<sup>64</sup> More precisely we find another traditional policy that relies on the United States to contain Japan. Tsarist, Soviet, and now Russian leaders count on such a containment due to the alliance between the United States and Japan. Or they seek to exploit the competitive relationship those two states

now have, and have had regarding economic and political issues in Asia. The tactic of exploiting U.S.-Japanese "contradictions" dates back to Count Sergei Witte at the Portsmouth treaty negotiations in 1905. He first outlined the notion, later adopted by Lenin and Stalin, that U.S. pressure would prevent Japan from either having a free hand to attack Vladivostok or to dominate China.<sup>65</sup> Today, too, the purpose of U.S.-Russian partnership in Asia is not just to prevent regional or global tensions that could lead to another cold war. Rather Moscow aspires to play a triangular game with Washington and Tokyo so Japan cannot act freely in Asia.

At the same time, U.S. policymakers have long understood (at least since Theodore Roosevelt) that "It is best [that Russia] should be left face to face with Japan so that each may have a moderating action on the other."<sup>66</sup> Washington also understands this logic. In 1993 the United States supported Japan on the issue of the Southern Kuriles, knowing full well that this support would not lead to a treaty with Moscow, and reaffirming its position in Tokyo. At the same time the United States compelled Japan to pay for Russian reform against its will and thus undermined the linkage of economics and politics that had been at the heart of Japanese strategy towards Russia. In this way it manipulated the triangle while preserving a partnership with Russia and Russo-Japanese tension.

U.S. policymakers have long understood the strategic rationales governing Soviet and Russian policy in Asia and Moscow's need to find some way to relieve the economic and strategic pressure on Russia's position there. In mid-1947, Admiral Charles M. Cooke, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in the western Pacific wrote,

If the Soviet position in the [Russian] maritime provinces is not integrated to the industrial and agricultural support of Manchuria, not supported by the strategic reinforcement of warm water ports of Port Arthur, Dairen, and northern Korea, and is forced to continue to be dependent upon a line of supplies over the Trans-Siberian railway, the maritime province position continues to be a source of weakness and vulnerability to Russia . . . If, however, Soviet eastern Asia becomes self-sufficient . . . Soviet Asia can then become an element of strength in the over-all Soviet power structure.<sup>67</sup>

In 1949, George Kennan wrote that the security of Japan, India, Southeast Asia, and Australia depended "in large measure on the denial of SEA to the Kremlin."<sup>68</sup>

Denying the sea to the Kremlin meant bottling up its navy on Russia's Pacific Coast and using Japan and South Korea as forward bases for U.S. forces in Asia. This policy incorporated the Russo-Japanese bilateral rivalry dating back to 1894 into the very structure of the cold war in Asia. Clearly, Washington has long understood the necessity of preserving Russo-Japanese tensions and contradictions just as Moscow understood the need to keep Japan and China at bay and Japan and the United States from assuming belligerent anti-Russian postures.

Since Manchuria and northern China, in particular, are the zones by which Russian land may be menaced, and because Russian forces are continually at risk because of a weak logistical, transport, and communications base; Russian military power in the area has faced two alternatives. Either it became wholly self-sufficient to preserve the structural regional division of labor until such time as massive investment succeeded in overcoming the inherent handicaps in Russia's posture; or, on the other hand, Russia had to rely on foreign investment to develop the area economically or provide logistical support in wartime. This adds another rationale for collaboration with the United States or, today, with China as economic partner in the region. This is especially so given Japanese reluctance to invest heavily in Asian Russia. Jacob Kipp has shown that in World War II the Soviet Manchurian operation was logistically impossible without extensive time to transport men, platforms, and supplies over vast distances using U.S.-supplied transportation systems and the U.S. Navy.<sup>69</sup> U.S. military pressure, i.e., its threat to invade Japan or Manchuria, also diverted the Kwantung Army and Tokyo from paying full attention to the implications of Russia's buildup or contesting it. Today too, it is only by partnership with China and America that Russia can defuse current and potential future threats to its exposed position in Asia.

More clearly than ever, Asia is militarily an economy of force theater that must defend itself exclusively by its own resources.

Equally clear is that today Russian strategic and conventional forces are thereby linked as mutually supportive forces for a bastion, not a jumping off point (at least for years to come). Indeed, the START II Treaty makes the strategic value of the SSNs and SSBNs ever greater and further justifies a tough position towards Japan on the Southern Kurile Islands.<sup>70</sup> Both Russian and U.S. officials well know that the regional role of the United States as constrainer of Japan, Russia, or China does not end with the demise of the USSR. If anything, it increases even as regional actors' definition of security expands into civilian, economic areas.<sup>71</sup> Paradoxically the START II Treaty will consolidate the strategic restraint of Japan by making control of the seas around Russian Asia and their denial to the United States and Japan more vital.

The treaty makes Russia's navy a more important guardian of strategic stability inasmuch as SSBNs will carry over 50 percent of nuclear warheads. But the threat to those SSBNs can grow due to improvements in conventional means of strategic antisubmarine warfare (ASW). Russian defense specialists and naval officers told a U.S. research team from the Center for Naval Analysis:

The model of nuclear deterrence in the Cold War demanded a constant threat to the nuclear forces of the other side. Currently such a threat is also borne by precision-guided munitions (PGMs). ASW is more important in this sphere, where the United States has clear-cut superiority. Within the limits of START II, the United States could jeopardize strategic stability if its ASW capabilities were used to the fullest. Nuclear strategic submarines, formerly considered the most invulnerable elements of the deterrent, can be the most vulnerable if the United States tries to fully utilize its ASW superiority. The threat of destruction of strategic nuclear weapons by conventional means—i.e. ASW—can force Russia to decide to use them before they lose them.<sup>72</sup>

This analysis perfectly accords with the defense doctrine's nuclear first postulates. In the Asia-Pacific Region the threat to SSBNs which have been removed to their home ports becomes all the more crucial, particularly since the Russian Navy expects the United States will deploy ASW forces and initiate operations against their SSBNs early in the conflict if

not in its initial phase. Whether the threat comes from SSNs or conventional ASW is immaterial; Russian SSBNs in the Seas of Okhotsk and Japan must be protected by multiple barriers. Those include submarines, surface ships, carrier air, shore-based aircraft, sensors, also space-based sensors, and, prospectively, strike systems.<sup>73</sup> A recent Russian study of its future navy observes that these factors make ASW issues central to strategic stability and make the forward deployment of U.S. ASW systems a constant source of tension in bilateral relations.<sup>74</sup> This means that the Southern Kuriles must be retained since the alternative would mean not just forward basing of those ASW forces in Japan but in the islands themselves.

For these reasons the authors of this study want to demilitarize the entire area as part of confidence-building measures.<sup>75</sup> Then, and only then, would transfer of the islands not enhance threats to Russian security.<sup>76</sup> Their call for CBMs leading towards demilitarization of the area indicate the powerful obstacle that the Russian Navy, General Staff, and Ministry of Defense make up when the return of the Southern Kurile Islands comes on the agenda, and the main reason for the security proposals discussed above. And it underpins the political rationale of bringing in the United States to deter or constrain Japan. For only when the United States is able and willing both to restrain Japan and to demilitarize the Northwest Pacific, would those elites feel secure. Russian SSBNs, SSNs, strategic ASW, and conventional forces would then be infinitely more secure in their bastions. For that reason, even under today's friendly atmosphere, it is most unlikely that the U.S. Navy will accept that range of CBMs because then it will have lost its capability to deny the sea to the Russians, something that has been its task for almost 50 years. Given the strength of the Mahanian legacy in the U.S. Navy, it is difficult to see it foregoing that option. But as long as the U.S. Navy maintains its strategic mission of denying the sea to Russia, Russian military leaders will insist that the islands remain the key to the Pacific Fleet's bastion and therefore will remain locked. These reasons for the status quo (and they are hardly new ones or even unknown to the Russian military), preclude anything like



the nightmare scenarios proposed below by Russian military analysts from happening.

These strategic considerations underlie the Russian armed forces' staunch refusal to contemplate yielding the islands and explain their intervention into the policy debate in 1992-93. However, the continuation of this militarized approach to Asia makes it all but impossible to improve relations with Japan while entailing a heavy economic-political price. First, Marshal Shaposhnikov, as Minister of Defense, admitted that no such U.S. threat existed.<sup>77</sup> Second, nor can the scenario of Japan fighting Russia for the United States be supported inasmuch as Japanese defense spending is declining. Third, others claim that if the islands were returned, Japan alone could then bottle up Russian naval forces in their home ports. These scenarios do not make sense unless we can explain the opposition to rapprochement with Japan and cession of the islands in a way that goes beyond these contradictory and illogical propositions outlined by Shaposhnikov and other figures.

The means for doing so can be found in Soviet/Russian military writings and analysis of their regional doctrine and strategy. First, Soviet military writing has in the past exhibited the same kind of contradictory and hence closed perspective on improving relations with an enemy state, namely Israel. During the early 1970s, the military press argued that Israel would never withdraw from lands conquered in 1967, but also postulated that such withdrawal was a *condition sine qua non* for peace. Since this circle was closed, war was the only option except for the fact that Soviet military power deterred such an option. Thus, by a process of elimination, military organs and considerations became the primary vehicles of regional Soviet policy in the Near East.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, this conceptual tradition goes back at least to Tsarist officials writing in the 1880s-90s about the Far East (then called Priamur'e). A recent study on the Trans-Siberian railroad, Russia's main overland link to the region, concludes,

Paradoxically, at the same time that the Russian General Staff saw Priamur'e as the source of Russia's weakness and ineffectiveness in the Far East, its members were under the impression that it gave

Russia preeminence in the Pacific and made the rest of the world envious enough to plan its joint conquest.<sup>79</sup>

Secondly, Soviet military objectives against Japan which were published in early 1991 have probably not been significantly revised. The documents state that in the event of war with Japan the forces in the Pacific TVD (theater of strategic military actions) have the following goals:

- Control the waters surrounding Russia including the Seas of Japan and Okhotsk;
- Prevent U.S. naval strikes by searching for, detecting, and destroying U.S. naval forces at sea;
- Maintain a nuclear launch capability against the United States and enemy forces and installations in the region;
- Deter China from entry into the war;
- Gain control over key channels in the region.<sup>80</sup>

These objectives underscore the central importance of the Southern Kurile Islands as guardians of the entry into the Seas of Japan and Okhotsk. Russian strategy demands that Russia alone be able to come and go in these waters. Therefore the threat from Japan and the United States is two-sided. One side is that they, not Russia, will be able to use those islands and waters to bottle up the fleet and thus launch strikes against Russia from fleet to shore. Alternatively they prevent Moscow's forces from going out to sea and engaging enemy forces far forward, as called for in classic Soviet doctrine. The need to preserve SSBNs against ASW in the initial phase of any conflict, as we saw above, also imposes a requirement for first, even preemptive use of nuclear and conventional forces to stop the ASW threat.<sup>81</sup> Even under the desperate circumstances presently obtaining in the navy, its commanders, and evidently the MOD, are unwilling to let go of the perspectives embodied in this mission hierarchy. Naval spokesmen mince no words about how they see their defensive mission whether in the Pacific theater or elsewhere.

CINC Admiral Feliks Gromov, Admiral Kasatonov, and Chief of Staff Admiral V. Selivanov all list strategic deterrence as the navy's primary mission, along with retaining a high readiness and capability to defend Russian assets and to strike at the enemy's key installations. This deterrence and defense of Russian assets and interests must also take place, first of all, in seas contiguous to Russia.<sup>82</sup> The navy must deploy far forward and attack enemies there to deny them platforms and strike capabilities in the distant oceans and in the waters near Russia. In Northeast Asia, the near approaches are the Seas of Japan and Okhotsk which must perforce be exclusive Russian military domains. Ceding the islands compromises the entire strategic and operational doctrine of Russia's Pacific Fleet and also opens up the ground forces to long-range naval and air attacks which they cannot avert by their own assets. Russian strategy and operational art in this theater labors under the shadow of modern naval war and its technology, the unfavorable geographical problem posed by Japan's and Korea's location astride major waterways, and their ability to bottle up the Russian fleet there. Long-range naval and air missiles, especially SLCMs, have long been perceived by Moscow as the main threat. To avert that threat, Russian forces must engage enemy platforms far forward before they can get into range to fire.

Russian doctrine has inherited the Soviet view that air superiority is the precondition for naval superiority and that air superiority, as demonstrated in Iraq, can determine the course if not outcome of the war. Therefore, it is essential that Moscow create an impregnable air defense umbrella over its Pacific Fleet to prevent long-range strikes against its ships and platforms. Ceding the islands allows for enemy strike platforms to close in. For Russia to defend its submarine and surface vessel "bastions" in the Pacific it must, even now, strive to expand its naval and air defense umbrella, deployment potential, and strike capability. In the Far East Moscow must consistently aim at expanding its defense envelope, especially air and sea, against missiles and other strikes, a military policy which inescapably means creating a naval, air and air defense umbrella over Japan and the Korean peninsula.<sup>83</sup> For this reason, the decision to mothball and phase out Russia's Kiev

class aircraft carriers and the VSTOL Yak-38 Forgers is a sharp blow to the Pacific Fleet, but will probably make its commanders more adamant about these islands.<sup>84</sup> What Russian military men prefer is expressed in the notion, dating back to 1946, of a limited TVD where Russian forces exercise exclusive control or command of the sea, particularly that region which is vital to the conduct of operations or where operations will occur. Such control also entails freedom of movement to conduct the operation. The greater the long-range threat, the larger the envelope of this limited TVD and the dominion exercised by Russian forces must then be.<sup>85</sup>

Accordingly the general military perspective of the Russian armed forces, expressed by its fleet commanders and the CIS Minister of Defense, inevitably puts Russia on a geostrategic collision course with Japan. Relations should be improved by all means, if possible, but no strategic assets, certainly not the Southern Kuriles, can be given up since they will *inevitably* become a base or platform for enemy action. Precisely because Japan appeared as an enemy decreed by fate, military leaders, who were impressed by the use of the military to restore order in 1989, became enthusiastic proponents of an alliance with China against Japan on ideological and strategic grounds.<sup>86</sup> This alliance is expressed in admiration for Chinese reforms, powerful support for Russian arms sales that, *inter alia*, place pressure on Japan, and political links among military officials.

### **The Consequences of Russia's New Policies.**

Today the militarizing approach with its China first policy has won out and determines Russian policy in Asia. Relations with Asia's other states fall into place because of this. In Central and South Asia, China and Russia share a common interest in stabilizing the situation so that Islamic or other forms of ethnonational assertiveness do not arise either in Central Asia or Sinkiang.<sup>87</sup> Regarding India, in 1986 Gorbachev told the Indians that the Soviet Union was going to improve ties with China and that India should also do so.<sup>88</sup> Today India is far down on the list of Russian priorities except insofar as Central Asia and arms sales are concerned because Russia is allied

(Kozyrev's word) to China.<sup>89</sup> Thus India, which regards China as a strategic threat, has had to come to terms with it.

Southeast Asia's interest to Russia also is substantially downgraded from the 1980s. Essentially it has only a marginal economic interest even though Kozyrev talked to ASEAN as if Russia still had a strategic interest there.<sup>90</sup> But Russia will do nothing to jeopardize vital Chinese interests although it hopes not to have to take a stand. Its silence in 1988 over the incidents in the Spratly Islands when Sino-Vietnamese fighting broke out exemplifies that policy. While Russia sees the area as a lucrative entrepot for trade, particularly in weapons, it is only a player by courtesy in local security dialogues. Yet the aggressive effort to trade and sell weapons there ultimately contradicts its policy toward China because Chinese doctrine and force structure is clearly oriented to local regional wars of power projection into Southeast Asia and its maritime territories.<sup>91</sup> Thus Russian policy, governed by the militarizing approach, risks having to choose between China and its neighbors to the south.

The Russo-Chinese bilateral relationship is now a non-aggression pact. Article IV of the bilateral treaty announced on December 18, 1992, stated that,

Both parties will not participate in any form of political or military alliance which is directed against the other party, and will not conclude any form of treaty of agreement with a third country which jeopardizes the national sovereignty and the security interest of the respective other party; no party shall allow a third country to use its territory in a manner which threatens the national sovereignty and the national security interest of the other party.<sup>92</sup>

And the nuclear nonaggression pact of 1994 corrects the loophole in Russia's nuclear doctrine and goes further along the line of the 1992 treaty.<sup>93</sup> First, in regard to Central Asia and India, both parties are freed from the prospect that the other might intervene should Islamic or other nationalism create a conflict within or near their borders. Second, India and Vietnam are deprived of Russian support against China. For Moscow, this treaty also relieves fears of a joint land and sea anti-Russian conflict, i.e., the nightmare of coalitions in Asia.

Third, it makes for joint cooperation in any conflict in Korea because it frees China (and Russia) from worrying about a second front in the north should it have to come to Pyongyang's aid (not something it wants to do anyway). Moreover, the alliance prevents the DPRK from playing both sides against the middle and fits in as well with both sides' interests in improving relations with South Korea and obtaining the large economic benefits thereof. From Russia's viewpoint, good ties to Seoul are an additional card against Japan. They are part of the continuing anti-Japan orientation of policy as well as a check upon North Korea and a link to the United States.<sup>94</sup> Finally, for both states, the treaty creates a permanent pressure on Japan which drives it back to dependence on Washington, exactly what Moscow and Beijing want to perpetuate. Thus this alliance makes eminent strategic sense.

However, there are negative sides to it. First, it is by no means clear or certain that Russia must have bad relations with Tokyo to have good ones with Beijing. That locks Russia into a self-perpetuating cycle of enmity with Japan and deprives it of entree into the explosive Asia-Pacific economy. China cannot substitute for Japan in this regard as it engages Russia mainly in barter trade and has been accused already of sharp dealing and inferior goods in return for arms.<sup>95</sup> China has no interest either in building up Russia's economic position, and its business classes are no more attracted to the chaos of Russian economics than is anyone else. Thus by leaning to one side Russia pays a heavy price for security in Asia. Another consideration is that Russian elites harbor, for all the protestation of friendship, a noticeable ambivalence, if not atavistic fear of China. This alliance is at best a temporary marriage of convenience. That is especially the case inasmuch as China will undergo a profound leadership crisis, and probably many political upheavals as its economic reforms deepen and intensify. Russia, the closer it is to any one faction or government in China, will not be able to extricate itself easily from a potentially unpredictable situation. Enmity may quickly come to replace amity.

Excessive closeness to China robs Russia of flexibility in policy as it has to keep one eye on China before pursuing any

other interests. By virtue of the sizable uncontrolled military exchange of weapons, scientists or technologies to China for barter or cash, factions inside Russian politics might also be unduly influenced by particularistic and short-term considerations of Chinese desires rather than by a Russian national interest. Factionalism on both sides of the relationship that commingled internal rivalries with foreign ones or with mutual friendship is a long and unfinished story. Thus Russia's Communist Party places strong emphasis on friendship with China. Were it or Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and other right-wing factions to come to power, this leaning to one side could prove very dangerous to Russia.

Finally, as suggested above, the excessively close ties to China reinforce the dominance over the security policy process of precisely the people who adhere to traditional Soviet positions that inhibit reform and democracy at home. The longer the militarizing approach remains dominant, the longer Russia will see its interests in the light of permanent hostility from other states. Accordingly, the military-industrial complex will retain its hegemony in Russian politics, particularly if it can receive large amounts of cash for contributing to Asian arms proliferation.<sup>96</sup> Just as the United States should be seeking to restrain Russian imperial ambitions in Europe, so too should it remember that we seek to do it in Asia as well. As noted in the beginning of this monograph, it is all too easy for American analysts and officials to ignore the fact that Russia is an Asian power. But we do so at our peril because we then avert our gaze from important security developments in Asia and domestic trends in Russia, both of which could rebound severely against us. While it may be sound policy to let sleeping bears lie; it is emphatically not sound policy to let sleeping guards do so.

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